



United We Ride in Puget Sound

Mobility, Quality, Efficiency through Regional Coordination



A five year plan to improve regional travel
between Pierce, Snohomish and King Counties
for transportation disadvantaged people
by better coordinating transportation services.



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Rhonda's Story

Rhonda Brown is a 57 year old Pierce County resident with a form of Multiple Sclerosis. A mother, an attorney and a community volunteer, Rhonda uses regional transit to get to work, meetings and events around the region.

Because of her mobility challenges Rhonda's trips demand an additional layer of coordination. From the call center operators to the drivers, transit staff plays a key role in making the transit system user-friendly for people with disabilities.

Rhonda often feels like she is "taking up the driver's time" when she asks for help boarding the bus and being secured into place". Rhonda laments that "drivers can make you feel confident about your ability to travel or can make you feel isolated."

Rhonda reflects on the number of challenges faced by people with disabilities, as well as simple changes that could make travel easier. Dealing with multiple bus systems and multiple schedules is confusing and difficult to manage. A coordinated scheduling system might reduce the wait time at transfer stops.

Most bus riders don't have to worry about what they might find at every bus stop. Rhonda does. Like many people with disabilities, she uses an electronic-powered wheelchair, with equipment that is sensitive to extreme weather. For her to travel safely, she needs accessible bus stops that are both convenient and safe for her to get to, wait at, and board from. In addition these stops need to exist within the wider city plan of accessible sidewalks, crosswalks, and other routes of travel.

Otherwise, every trip can be a risk that she must take in order to have basic mobility.



United We Ride in Puget Sound

Improving regional mobility between King, Pierce and Snohomish

In 2005, Sound Transit brought together interested parties to develop this regional special needs transportation coordination five-year plan for the Central Puget Sound.

The intent of this plan is to map a course for improving regional travel between King, Pierce and Snohomish counties for people with special transportation needs by better coordinating transportation services between transits, human services agencies, school districts, and other community transportation services.

For the purpose of this plan, the statutory definition of people with special transportation needs is used: “those people, including their attendants, who because of physical or mental disability, income status, or age, are unable to transport themselves or purchase transportation.”

Regional or cross-jurisdictional transportation refers to travel across the boundaries of governmental entities, such as counties, cities, school districts and between the service areas of human service or non-profit agencies.



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Since 1999, the three counties in the region have been working at the local level to coordinate special needs transportation services. The local special needs transportation coalitions are the Snohomish County Special Needs Transportation Coalition (SNOTRAC), the King County Key Partners in Transportation, and the Pierce County Coordinated Transportation Coalition (PCCTC). The transportation coordination activities of each county focus on coordinating services within the county. However, regional travel requires coordination among the counties.

This five-year regional plan is the logical next step of bringing the three counties together to agree on how to most efficiently and effectively work together to improve regional mobility as well as support the sustainability of local coordinated transportation efforts.

As an example of coordination, Sound Transit has offered this work to the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) to develop the region's coordinated public transit and human service transportation plan which is the necessary framework for prioritizing projects to receive Federal Transit Administration (FTA) JARC, New Freedom, and Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities funding.

The PSRC plan is similar, yet different, than the Sound Transit “United We Ride in Puget Sound” plan. The PSRC plan expands the Sound Transit plan to include Kitsap County and Washington State Ferries, local and regional travel, urban and rural travel, and Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) planning. The Sound Transit plan provides a list of projects that support improved regional travel. Both plans have three major components:

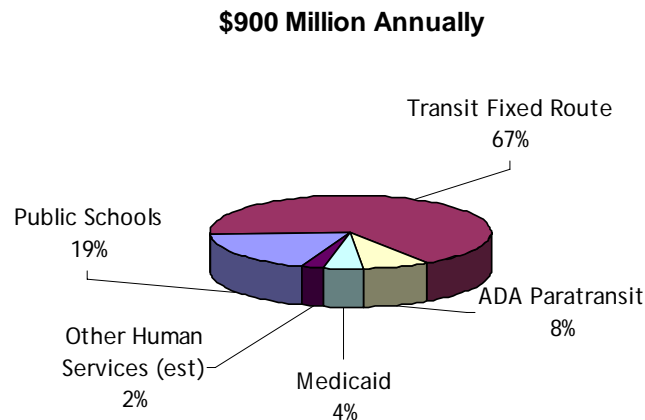
- Background on special needs transportation coordination in the region; and a demographic profile of each county.
- A view of regional mobility today, analyzing transportation resources, regional origins and destinations, existing transportation services, needs, gaps, and what is currently happening to coordinate services.
- A vision of mobility in the future, examining anticipated demand for service, laying out strategic goals and objectives for the next five years.

BACKGROUND

Over sixty-two federal programs, as well as state, regional, and local programs fund over \$900 million annually for approximately 219 million passenger trips (excluding ferry trips) of public transportation throughout the Puget Sound region.

Over the past decade, governments at all levels have placed increasing emphasis on the need to coordinate transportation services. The primary goal in this coordination effort is to create efficiencies that will not only lead to improved service, but expanded service.

Figure 1: Public Transportation Expenditures administered in the Central Puget Sound in 2005 (ferry data unavailable)



Sources: Medical Assistance Administration (Medicaid data); Washington State Department of Transportation (transit data); Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI – School data); other estimated trips assumes 870,000/year at an average of \$23 per trip.

NOTE: To eliminate double count, transit trips funded by Medicaid are removed from the Medicaid cost.

An increased focus on coordinating special needs transportation services and funding resulted after the United State General Accounting Office issued their findings on multiple funding programs creating duplication of services and service fragmentation. Efforts to coordinate special needs transportation services have been occurring in Washington State and the Puget Sound Region for years.

Federal Transportation Coordination

The Federal Interagency Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility (CCAM) launched the United We Ride initiative in 2004 to facilitate coordination between transportation funders, brokerages, and providers. Additionally the initiative provides funding for state and local governments in their transportation coordination efforts.

State Transportation Coordination

The Washington State Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation (ACCT) is an independent council comprised of state agencies, state legislators, and consumers. It was formed during Washington's 1998 legislative session. ACCT provides funding and technical assistance to support the coordination of special needs transportation at the local level.

Regional and Local Transportation Coordination

Historically, a lack of transportation options has been reported as a barrier to accessing services, employment, and activities for the special needs community. Counties in the region have been working locally over the last 5-10 years to coordinate transportation services and improve access and mobility.

Local coalitions addressing transportation coordination at the county level were instrumental in the development of this plan. The coalitions are:

- Snohomish County Special Needs Transportation Coalition (SNOTRAC)
- King County Key Partners in Transportation
- Pierce County Coordinated Transportation Coalition (PCCTC)

Sound Transit, the transit agency delivering regional transit service in the three urban counties along the east side of Puget Sound, has pulled the local coalitions together to develop this regional plan focusing on regional trips between the King, Pierce, and Snohomish counties.

An additional incentive for the three counties to work together to provide more mobility through coordination is a recent federal requirement under the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Equity Act of 2005 (SAFETEA-LU).

SAFETEA-LU supports and strengthens the ongoing coordination of planning and transportation services that are identified at both the local and regional levels. This act requires a project to be included in a Coordinated Transit and Human Services Transportation Plan to be eligible for certain grants from the Federal Transit Administration by fiscal year 2007. These grants are designed to break down existing barriers to the mobility of the special needs population.

The Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC), the Central Puget Sound's Metropolitan Planning Organization, will administer the project selection process for these funds. Previously, the PSRC conducted the project selection for JARC. With the passing of SAFETEA-LU, projects funded by the Elderly Persons and Persons with Disability fund and the New Freedom fund will be competitively selected by PSRC as well.

PSRC has adopted and expanded upon this plan to meet the federal SAFETEA-LU planning requirements.

For more **BACKGROUND** information, see Appendices A-F.

Northshore Gaps

If you walked into the office of Northshore Transportation Manager Bill Wilson, you would be immediately struck by the complexity of the coordinated transportation system mapped out on his wall.

A whiteboard is filled with grids indicating trip routes, pickup times, and equipment reports. Transportation is a critical part of the service Northshore Senior Services provides to adults and people with disabilities throughout King and Snohomish County.

Northshore Senior Services transportation consists of a fleet of 15 accessible vans driven by nine paid drivers. The drivers go through extensive training including CPR every two years, mobility/equipment security every two years, and other trainings at regular monthly meetings.

Mr. Wilson confides that one of the hardest things he has to do as a transportation manager is tell someone that they can't get a ride.

Because of the "3/4 mile rule" which stipulates that a person has to be within $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile of a bus route in order to receive an ADA paratransit trip, many seniors and disabled people do not qualify for service. Northshore tries to fill the gaps, but cannot take care of everyone who needs a ride.

Bill Wilson believes that there could be a lot more service for people in the Northshore area if his agency and other transit systems could coordinate more.

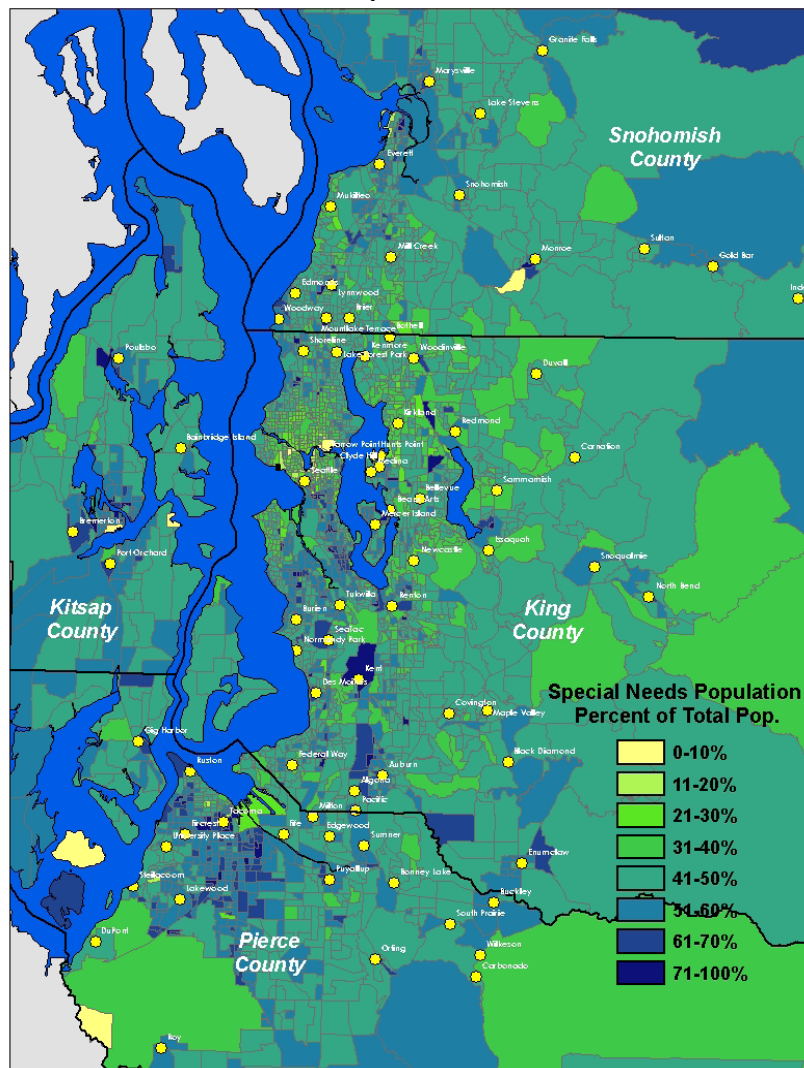
MOBILITY TODAY

In the three county region of approximately 3 million people, the population most likely to have special transportation needs is 1.9 million, a significant percentage of the population.

- 18.69% of the population has a disability
- 11.32% of the population is over age 65
- 9.76% of the population is low-income
- 22.66% of the population is between 5 and 17 years of age

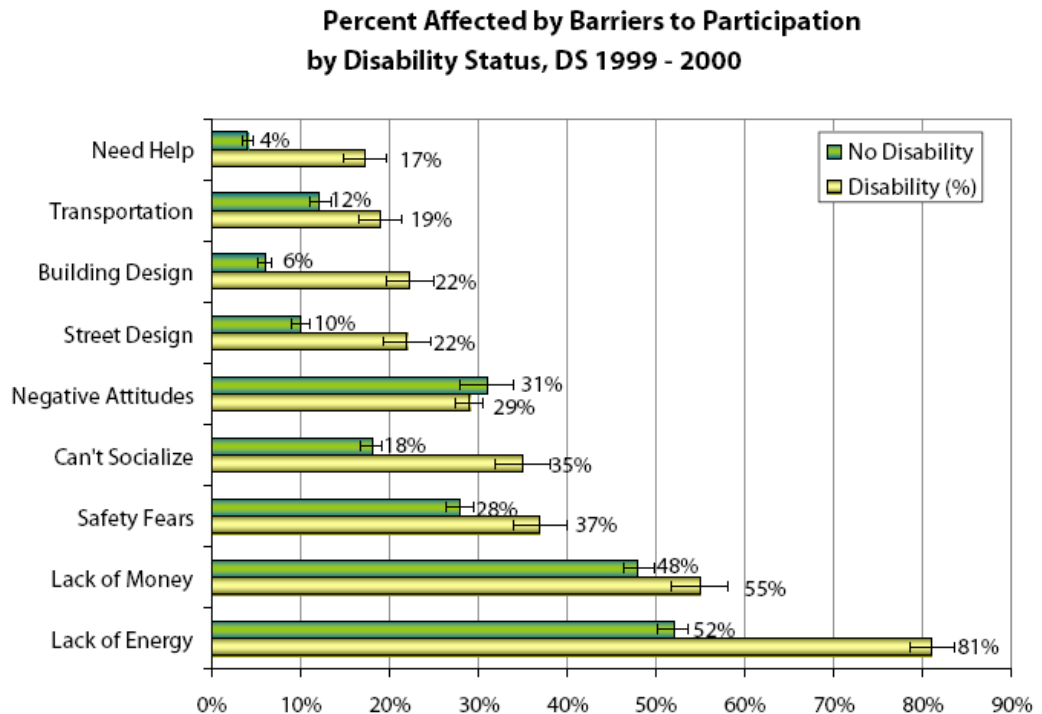
NOTE: Some people are in multiple population groups. e.g. a senior with a disability

Figure 2: Regional Populations Typically with Special Transportation Needs : Percent of Census Block Groups, 2000 US Census



Not all people in the “special needs” demographic groups have transportation challenges. According to *Disability in Washington State 2005* published by the Washington State Department of Health, about 4.4 percent of the Washington population (or 53,250 people in the Puget Sound Region) people older than 16 years found it difficult to go out alone.

While the report does not specifically address mobility limitations, it discusses different types of limitations and how they affect life activities. While people with disabilities are only one of the three population groups identified with potential transportation challenges, the chart below highlights that typical barriers to participation is heightened for those with disabilities.



While a 1.9 million is certainly overstating the estimated population with transportation challenges in the region, 53,250 is likewise understating the estimated population. The mid-range of 950,000 people is most likely a more accurate representation of people with transportation challenges, which would include those with temporary transportation issues such as a suspended license.

Transportation Services

The majority of the general public's non-automobile personal transportation trips are made by fixed route public transit or what is known as regular transit service. Of the 240 million annual trips in the 3-county region, approximately 52 percent (125 million trips) are provided by fixed-route transit.

This fixed route transit service is generally regularly scheduled service, which can be either a local bus, an express bus between cities or counties, commuter or light rail service or ferry service between cities along Puget Sound. The service is available to the general public with the payment of the appropriate fare.

The fixed route refers to the fact that the service is consistently provided on a daily or weekly basis and at set hours along the same route. Figure 3 illustrates the existing fixed route transit lines and service that is provided by the six transit agencies and Washington State Ferry System in the Central Puget Sound region.

Paratransit ADA service is provided within $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of the existing fixed route transit service footprint.

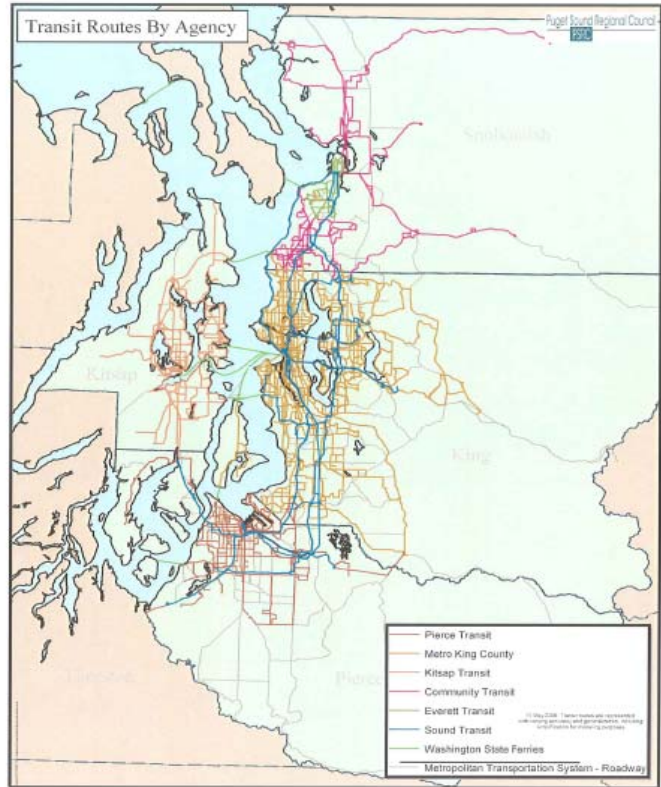
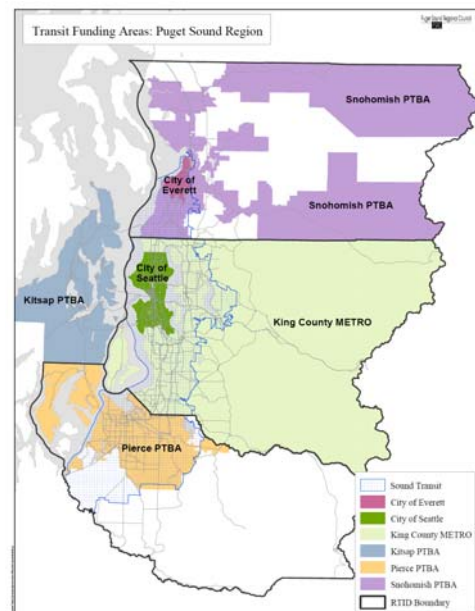


Figure 3: Transit Routes and Services Areas in Puget Sound

Figure 4: Transit Funding Areas

The various transit funding districts that fund the fixed route and paratransit services by district are illustrated in Figure 4. Some are county wide, such as in King County and others are specific to the urban areas within the county, such as the Pierce Public Transit Boundary Area. Others are specific to a city, such as Everett Transit.

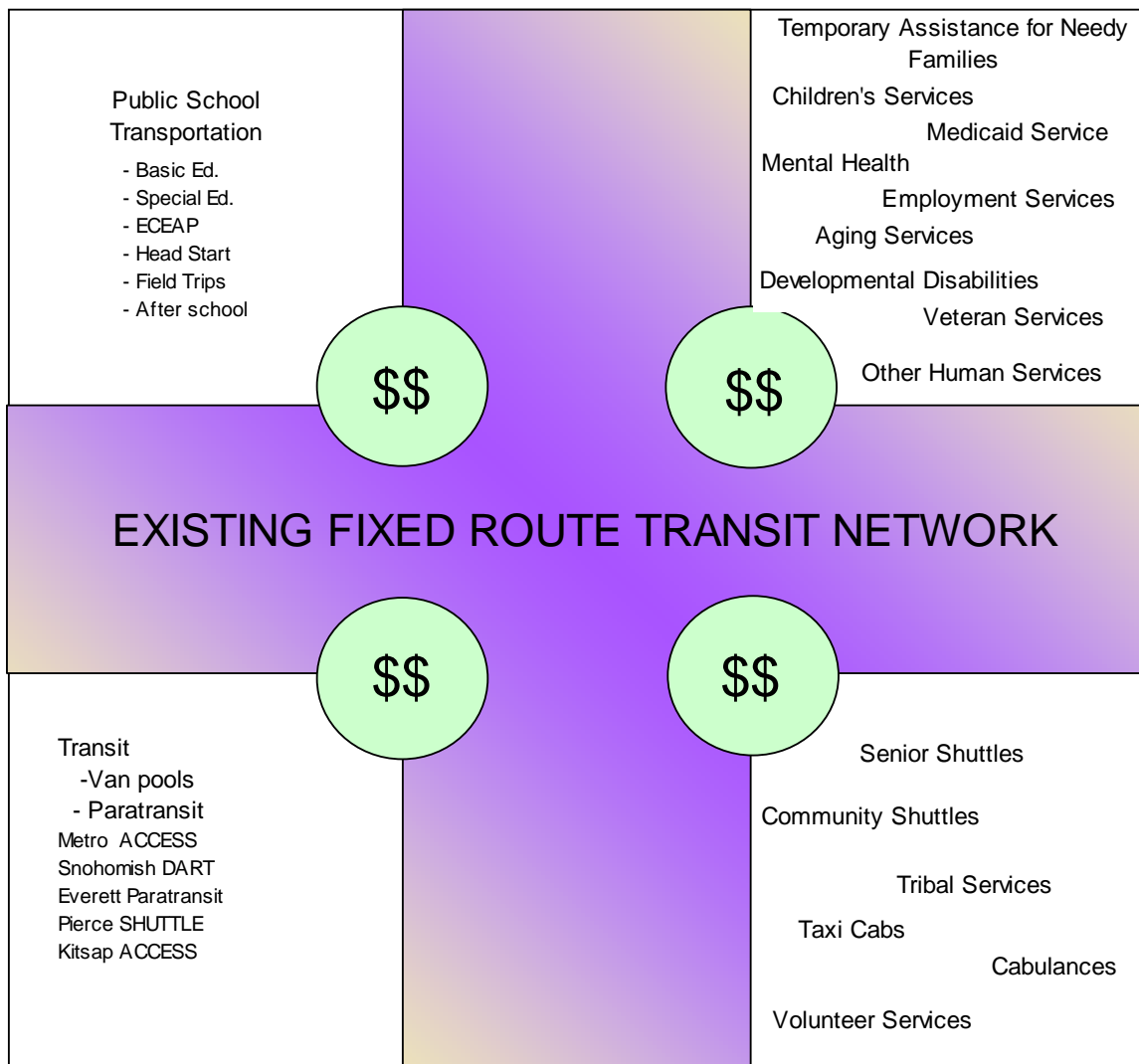
All of the transit districts in the Puget Sound Region provide some express service or final destination service in King County, particularly to downtown Seattle.



While the backbone of the public transportation system is the fixed route public transit system, it is not always available or may not meet special transportation needs.

Consequently, hundreds of other public and community transportation services fill in the gaps, including; schools, taxi and cabulance companies, non-profit agencies, volunteer programs, human service agencies, charters, and home delivery services. These agencies, in coordination with the transit agencies, make up the special needs transportation landscape for the region.

Figure 5: The Special Needs Transportation Landscape



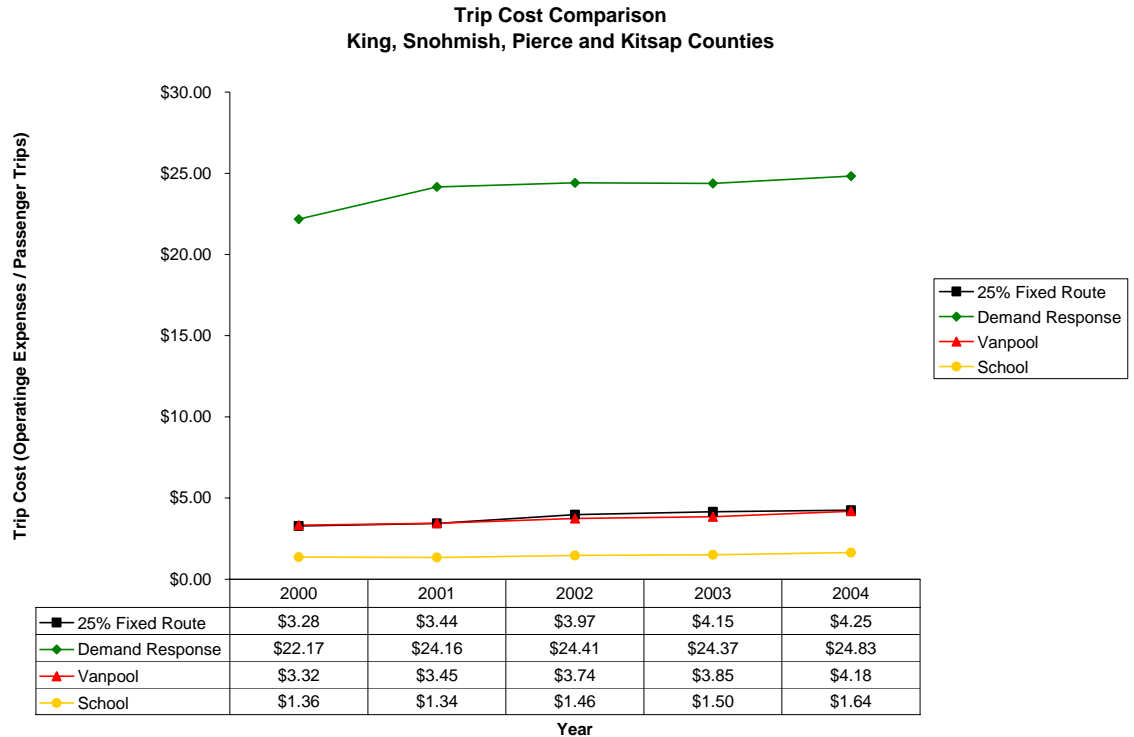
Transportation Costs

Fixed route transit, fixed-routed student transportation, and vanpools are the most cost-effective method to provide wide transportation access. Lower cost options such as these, range from \$1.64 to \$4.24 per trip.

Paratransit trips are, by their nature, more expensive trips. These trips are scheduled by reservation and are typically provided to people with a higher level of special needs in this region. The average cost per trip for this type of service, known as demand response service, is about \$25 per trip.

Although most of these trips are local, many involve crossing jurisdictional boundaries to reach regional medical centers, employment, government offices, human services, shopping areas, and social, cultural, or athletic events. The region must prepare to meet the growing demand for regional as well as local trips.

Figure 6: Trip Cost Comparisons Between Modes



Sources: Medical Assistance Administration (Medicaid data); Washington State Department of Transportation (transit data); Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI – School data)

For more information about **MOBILITY TODAY**, see Appendices G-J.

NEEDS, GAPS AND DUPLICATION

All three counties have identified transportation needs within their jurisdictions. Although the research methods and the target populations studied differed, the general areas of destination needs fall in these categories:

- Medical Facilities/ Appointments/ Pharmacies
- Grocery Store/Shopping
- Social/Recreation
- Employment
- Childcare
- Place of worship
- Community activities
- To/from other counties/districts
- Airport

People living outside of transit service areas typically had more transportation difficulties due to their limited options. The transportation needs of people living inside of transit service areas typically were service related (e.g. same day reservations, pickup windows, long travel or wait times, eligibility restrictions, transfers and connections between modes).

The frequency (how often) of transportation difficulty varied depending on the target population and destination type. People who are employed need transportation more frequently than people who have with other types of transportation needs (20 trips per month as compared to 5 trips per month).

Transportation needs typically are spread out through the day, but timeframes with the most transportation difficulty (although less traveled) are evening hours and weekends. People living outside of transit service areas typically had more transportation difficulties due to their limited mobility options.

In all three counties, regional or cross-jurisdictional trips were reported as a significant transportation need.

In addition to the community surveys, transportation providers were asked to rank the top three transportation limitations/barriers for their clients. In all three counties, insufficient service in rural areas ranked as the most significant transportation limitation. This barrier was followed by eligibility restrictions such being ineligible for ADA paratransit or Medicaid trips; and lack of information about available services and how to use them.

In addition to this data and reference to national research, the regional workgroup identified the following transportation gaps and needs based on their professional and personal experience.

Rider Needs and Gaps

Unserved or Underserved Areas. People often live in the more rural areas or the edges of cities due to lower cost housing options. However, to provide cost efficient service, transit agencies typically provide more frequent service in areas with more people, such as in urban areas. Consequently, many people are without transit service. Even within transit service areas, the service levels in some areas may not meet the travel needs of people. For example, the ADA paratransit services footprint typically extends only $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile beyond the fixed route transit system, so those people who live inside but at the edge of the urban area may still be outside of the transit service area.

There are also people who are eligible for ADA paratransit services, but need a higher level of service than the transit agency provides (e.g. door to door). Human service agencies typically provide a higher level of service, but are often designated for a specific target population (e.g. Veterans) or specific destination type (medical trips). Specialized transportation services are also limited on weekends and for social activities, such as going to a place of worship.

- **Ease of Use.** Once a person figures out how to use “the system,” whichever transportation system works for them, transportation becomes less challenging. However, learning how to use the system can be difficult for several reasons.
 - Different transit systems have different fare schedules, which is confusing and difficult for riders.
 - Riders eligible for multiple transportation programs must make multiple trip arrangements depending on their transportation need, not with a single provider.
 - Riders may need help getting on and off the vehicle, but there is often nobody available to help people at transfer points
 - Paratransit systems generally do not provide same day service, which means riders must always plan trips in advance and cannot be spontaneous about travel.
- **Access.** There are not enough affordable accessible or lift-equipped vehicles for people who are disabled, but not eligible for Medicaid or ADA paratransit services. Some of these people could ride the fixed route bus, but are unable to access it for a variety of reasons. The Center for People with Disabilities conducted a 2005 Bus Stop Survey which found that problems at bus stops made it difficult for people with disabilities to ride the bus. Problems included:
 - Blocked access to the stop by such things as tree limbs, landscaping rocks, and retaining walls
 - Ramps that are too steep
 - Some drivers don't provide boarding help at stops where boarding is difficult and may even refuse to stop
 - Bus stops that are too far from the accessible path of travel
 - Residue on the boarding surface, cracked pavement, uneven joints, pebbles or other rough surfaces that make boarding difficult
- **Transit/ Paratransit Trip Length and Transfers.** Transfers among the different transit systems add a great deal of time, inconvenience, confusion and frustration to regional travel. Fortunately, transits operate several regional express services to reduce ride times for many of the longer trips. This is very beneficial for people with special needs, the majority of whom use fixed route. However, regional ADA paratransit services for transit agencies do not mirror the regional express services. Consequently, transfers are necessary among paratransit systems and tend to be more lengthy and difficult for

people who by definition have the more severe disabilities. Transfers can be physically painful for some individuals.

- **Connections with Ferries.** Paratransit trips – funded by transit, Medicaid, and other human services - that involve ferries present a series of difficulties. The ferry system does not give priority to paratransit vehicles, so paratransit vehicles may have to wait for subsequent ferries if they can't board the intended sailing. This happens frequently on holidays and weekends. Riders can miss appointments, and if they are frail, the trip may be painful when extended. It is difficult to coordinate docking time with a pick up at the other end due to lack of communication between providers and the ferries.
- **Regional Transfer Site Amenities.** Riders whose trips involve a transfer are more likely to want amenities, access to information, or other features to help make their trip more seamless. An analysis of the amenities at the 21 regional transfer sites shows:
 - 18 do not have restrooms
 - 17 do not have pay phones
 - 15 do not have customer service/information
- **Safety and Supervision.** The fear of crime and difficulty boarding are two significant reasons people are reluctant to use public transportation. Busy cross streets, lack of amenities, and lack of assistance or enforcement are all safety hazards that are barriers for potential riders. In addition, transportation of children requires additional supervision beyond what is available on fixed route transit, due to age, behavior issues, or disabilities that require assistance to travel. In addition, people with special transportation needs have not been an integral part of emergency planning, which leaves a significant gap in how people unable to drive will be able to respond during natural disasters or other emergencies.

Operation Efficiency Needs and Gaps

- **Lack of Funding.** Coordination results in efficiencies, which in turn results in lower cost per unit of service. However, building the infrastructure for coordination requires an up-front investment. Without that investment, communities cannot do the work, invest in the technology, and build the community infrastructure to realize the efficiencies. The most effective coordination builds on existing resources and infrastructure, utilizing the fixed-route transit system as the backbone, and filling in the transportation gaps with other community transportation services. However, funding is insufficient for:
 - Expanding fixed route services and equivalent paratransit services,
 - Meeting specialized student transportation services such transportation for homeless students, foster care, early learning students, and special educational centers; and
 - Volunteer and other community transportation that provide higher levels of transportation service.

In addition, the ADA paratransit service generally is funded locally through the transit district's tax base, although it is a mandated service due to required compliance with Civil Rights laws. Since it is required service without a separate funding base, it competes with funding for fixed route service, resulting in the potential for a decrease in fixed route service to maintain the minimum level of ADA paratransit service. This discourages expansion of the paratransit service beyond the minimum to comply with the ADA laws.

A transportation funding system that funds multiple transportation options (fixed route, paratransit, schools, non-profit, etc) through various mechanisms would reduce the burden on the current transit districts tax bases, and support coordinated planning.

- **Duplication and Redundancy.** Various sources of funding restrict different transportation service to specific populations for specific purposes. This results in service duplication and redundancy in multiple areas, including:
 - Vehicles from different agencies may be traveling in the same corridor at the same time, but offer different services so do not pick up additional riders.
 - Schools, transit systems, and the Medicaid brokers operate their own training programs for drivers.
 - Schools, transit systems, and other transportation providers have their own in-house maintenance programs for vehicles.
 - Brokers, transits systems, senior programs, and other agencies each have their own call center for people to call to arrange for transportation.
 - Schools, transit systems, and community providers purchase vehicles and equipment individually.
 - Each transportation system has different eligibility requirements. A person who may qualify for more than one type of service may need to apply for several different programs with each having different requirements and processes. For example, some applications accept self-reported disabilities while others require a doctor's verification, and others require an evaluation.
- **Agency barriers.** In order to maximize economies of scale, a regional system supporting the exchange of information could allow transportation providers and brokers to share scheduling information, and provide the most cost efficient trip utilizing the range of transportation options available. The Central Puget Sound has significant barriers to overcome before such a system could be entertained. Specifically:
 - Different agencies have different requirements for vehicle safety, driver training, driver licensing, or other standards. For example, schools require fingerprinting of drivers and FBI background checks, but Medicaid does not. Some agencies require that drivers have a Commercial Drivers License (CDL) and others don't.
 - Agencies believe that liability will increase or funding will be jeopardized if they transport passengers who are not their clients.
 - A mechanism is needed to fairly distribute the cost of grouped trips.
 - Perceptions about grouping trips with students are inconsistent. For example, brokered trips for homeless students are not allowed to be grouped with other riders. However these same students are grouped with other riders for medical appointments funded under the Medicaid program.
- **Exchanging information – Software.** Transportation providers and brokers use different scheduling, dispatching, and reporting software, which makes sharing information more difficult. Consequently, transferring regional eligibility and scheduling data between and among ADA paratransit providers, Medicaid brokers, school districts and others is not automated.
- **Exchanging Information – Privacy.** A primary barrier in sharing information has been addressing confidentiality and privacy requirements. Privacy Acts, such as the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) prohibit sharing client information and authorize penalties for offenders.
- **Reporting requirements.** Federal, state, and local agencies that fund special needs transportation have different reporting requirements attached to their funds. Agencies that receive funds from multiple funding sources must set up labor intensive and costly data collection mechanisms to meet multiple reporting requirements. Money spent additional staff time to meet such requirements means less money to provide services.

Awareness Needs and Gaps

- **Information Partners.** “Gatekeepers”, the people who work with seniors, youth, people with disabilities, and low-income populations - are often the first point of contact for people with special transportation needs. Gatekeepers often don't have adequate information about the appropriate transportation choices and referrals for clients; or don't have the time to learn about the appropriate choices or referrals. Some social service agencies and other support services may not agree that a fixed-route bus is appropriate for their client. For these and other reasons, case managers and customer service representatives from social and health service agencies may advocate for modes of transportation that are more expensive because they fear the client will not get to the service if there is any inconvenience in using other transportation modes.
- **Awareness of available services.** Marketing of less expensive modes, such as fixed route transit, rideshare, and vanpools, is mostly targeted to commuters and not people with special transportation needs. Furthermore, funding is not available to meet the demand for specialized paratransit, volunteer and other community transportation, and hence marketing is not encouraged. Rural communities in particular are not aware of the options available to them due to the limited funding available for marketing and planning coordination.
- **Service Levels and Expectations.** There are no clear public transportation service level criteria in Puget Sound - such as defining adequate wait times, appropriate service frequency by area, or reasonable trip lengths. Without service levels clarified and broadly publicized, people develop expectations of the public transportation system that it is not designed to meet. This results in frustration for both the rider and the public transportation system.

For more reference information about **Needs and Gaps**, see Appendix K.

Homeless Students Need Rides

Tamara Williams is the Homeless Liaison for Tacoma Public Schools. She coordinates transportation for students under the McKinney-Vento Act, working directly with parents, shelter staff, community agencies, school staff and the transportation department. Together they identify and address the needs of eligible students and families.

The Tacoma School District has identified 998 McKinney-Vento eligible students, 683 of whom attend the Tacoma School District. The rest return to their school of origin in other school districts.

The students come from a wide variety of living situations including living in shelters, living with family and friends, living in hotels, and camping.

Students of the Tacoma School District travel from as far as Seattle North and Shelton South to attend school. Traveling these distances has an affect on the student's ability to learn - "at the point at which a student is traveling for over an hour to get to school it becomes a challenge to pay attention in class", explains Williams.

The Tacoma School District uses a range of transportation options to transport these students. Many of the students are transported on Tacoma School District bus routes. The district also purchases bus passes from Pierce Transit and gives the passes to high school students. Or the district may pay for mileage reimbursement. For the more difficult transportation situations, schools rely on Paratransit Service, Inc. to broker student transportation by arranging rides with qualified providers in the community.

When asked about the challenges of providing transportation to students under the McKinney-Vento Act, Williams noted the high cost to the district. According to Williams it cost roughly \$400,000 dollars a year to provide transportation for McKinney-Vento eligible students.

Another challenge is being flexible enough to respond to the constant changes in the living situation of these students. Williams notes that, "Many of the students eligible for transportation will be in one living situation one week and another one the next; a circumstance can change and require a whole new transportation plan".

Mobility Tomorrow

The general population will increase 7.2% by 2010 and 19.8% by 2020. In comparison, the subset of the over 65 population will increase by 10.6% by 2010, and 76.9% by 2020. With this increase in population comes an increase in demand for transportation services, especially for the aging population.

Based on the current utilization of transportation services and projected population growth, a 15% increase in trips by 2010 is estimated. This means:

- 18 million additional fixed route transit trips
- 13 million additional basic and special education trips
- 3 million additional ferry trips
- 450,000 additional van pool trips
- 375,000 additional paratransit trips under the American with Disabilities Act
- 150,000 additional paratransit Medicaid trips
- 100,000 additional human services provider trips

To move the region closer to a regional vision of mobility, quality and efficiency through coordination, this plan supports the three goals and nine strategies as illustrated in Figure 6.

The strategies were identified as key ways to act on the goals and objectives over the next five years. With public input from an innovative television program called Citizen Access, the strategies were ranked into first, second and third priority levels for each goal area.

These strategies and any related projects mentioned in this plan are recommendations only. Implementation is dependent upon appropriate funding.

QUALITY: Put People First

First Priority: Better Connections -

Increase and improve connections to and within the transportation systems for everyone. This strategy supports projects that:

- simplify how to plan, reserve and pay for trips with a single phone call or one website visit.
- establish more centralized and coordinated regional transfer points between all modes
- reduce wait and trip times for paratransit regional trips.
- improve access to regional medical facilities, employment centers, and social activities.
- connect rural areas to regional and local connection points.

CITIZEN ACCESS

Citizen Access utilized three different citizen participation approaches to gather feedback on the regional plan. A televised electronic town hall meeting, phone voting from home while watching the meeting on television, and an online or phone survey after the program. All of the participants ranked and prioritized the draft goals and strategies.

Of the eighty-one participants, fifty percent were between the ages of 30 and 59. Nearly 60 percent of the participants listed more than one reason for their transportation challenge, including a combination of income, age, and/or disability. Seventy percent of the participants use specialized transportation services, with 43 three percent using it on a weekly basis.

A separate evaluation of this public feedback method was conducted. While much can be done to improve the process, such as including more non-structured discussion, there is tremendous potential for the **Citizen Access** model to expand the number of voices in the public input process, especially for those with transportation challenges.

While traditional public meetings can range from 2 – 20 participants with an approximate cost of \$250 to \$2500 per person, the Citizen Access model has the potential to reach thousands of people. In this example, 81 people participated and an estimated 6,000 households watched the program. The estimated cost for **Citizen Access** amounted to \$13 to \$926 per person/household.

See Appendix Q for the voting results from **Citizen Access** and general public comments.

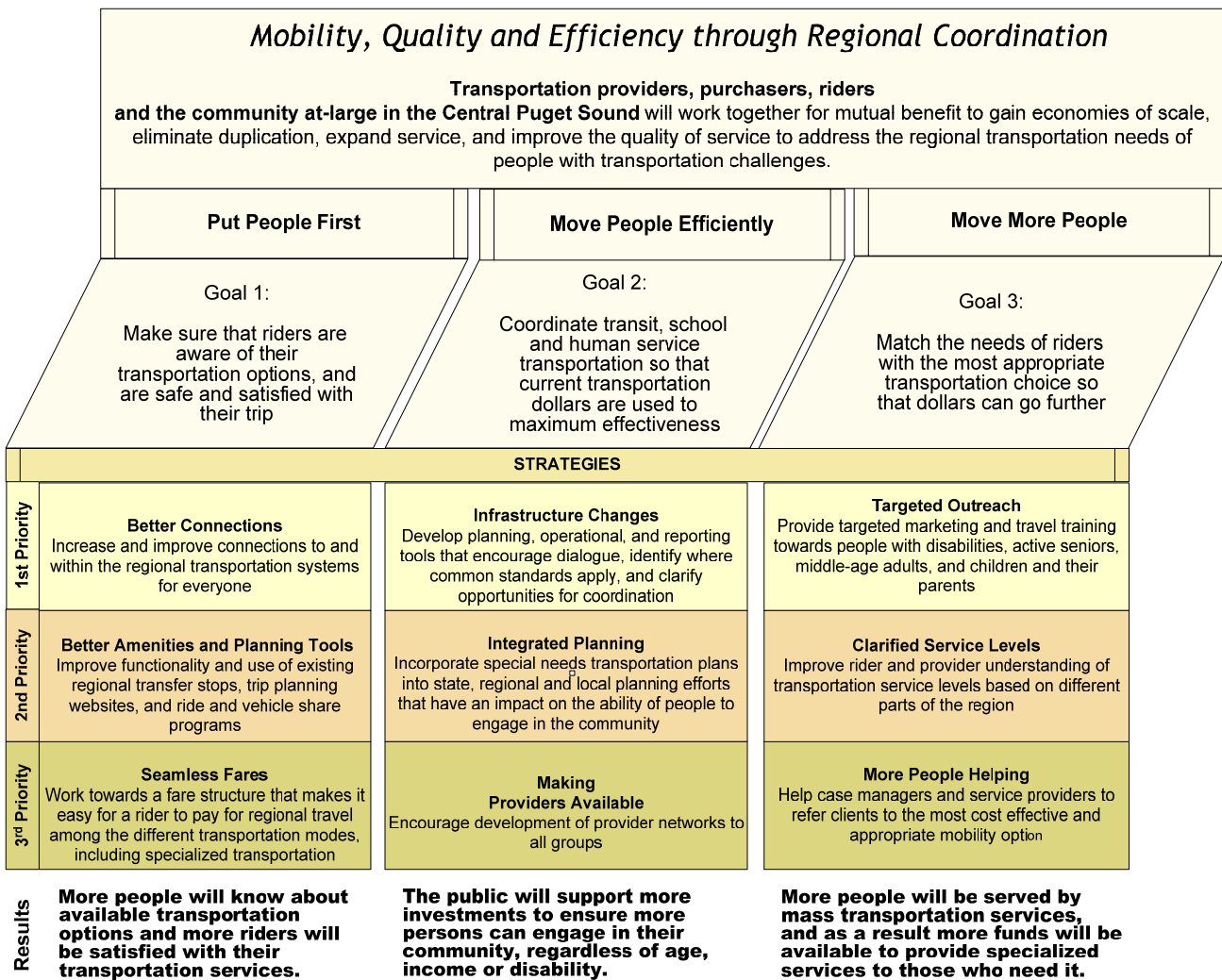
Second Priority: Better Amenities and Planning Tools - Improve functionality and use of existing transfer stops, trip planning websites, and ride and vehicle share programs. This strategy supports projects that:

- improve facilities and amenities at bus stops and transfer stations.
- increase use of supervised or personal attendants on challenging trips or at transfer points.
- coordinate and enhance existing trip planners, resource guides, or rideshare programs.

Third Priority: Seamless Fares – Work towards a fare structure that makes it easy for a rider to pay for travel among the different transportation modes, including specialized transportation. This strategy supports projects that:

- simplify the ability for riders to use multiple systems.
- simplify the ability of riders to make multiple stops (chain trips).
- help agencies come to agreement on common fare structures, or seamless systems that support various fare structures.

Figure 6. Strategic Vision, Mission, Goals and Objectives



EFFICIENCY: Move People Efficiently

First Priority: Infrastructure Changes – Develop planning, operational, and reporting tools that encourage dialogue, identify where common standards apply, and clarify opportunities for coordination. This strategy supports project that:

- provide tiered vehicle and driver standards that are consistent throughout the region and that respond to varying levels of service needs.
- utilize technology to share ride demand data between agencies and non-profits while maintaining rider privacy.
- leverage existing taxpayer investments, such as 2-1-1, 5-1-1, smart card technology, etc.
- increase coordinated trip scheduling and billing among and between school districts, transit agencies, and human service agencies
- support implementation of a coordination model as identified under Figure 9.

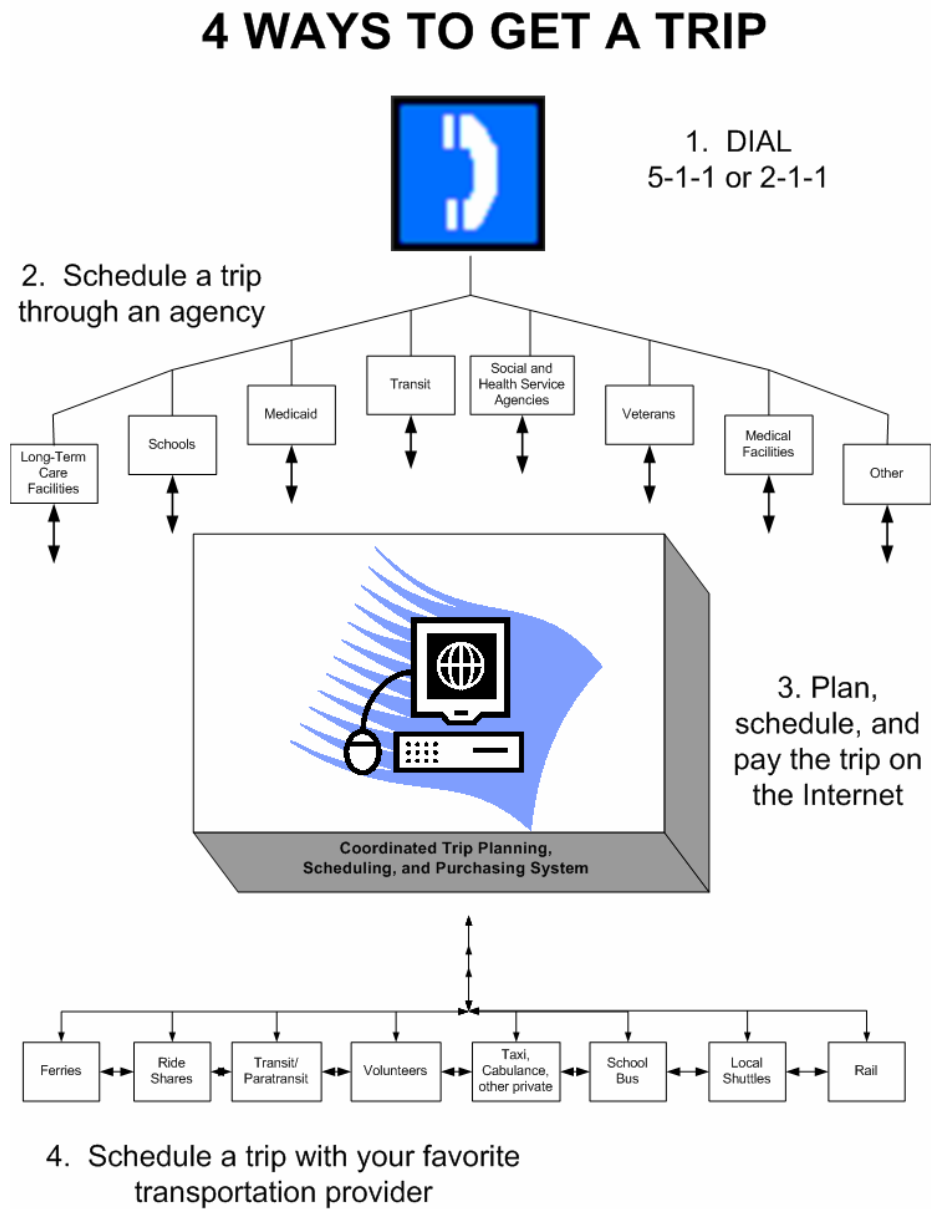
Second Priority: Integrated Planning - Incorporate special needs transportation plans into state, regional and local planning efforts that have an impact on the ability of people to engage in the community. This strategy supports projects that:

- jointly support multiple special needs transportation objectives in different state, regional or local plans (e.g., local growth management plan and human service plan).
- support ongoing dialogue, planning and decision-making between human service agencies, transit agencies, school districts, non-profit agencies, land use agencies, transportation providers and others.

Third Priority: Make Providers Available – Encourage development of provider networks to all groups. This strategy supports projects that:

- utilize technology to connect providers in an area with any transportation system dispatch.
- increase the available pool of qualified drivers and providers.
- help small transportation providers with developing quality programs.
- increase the ability of school districts to be a part of the community transportation provider pool.

Figure 7. Vision of a regional coordinated transportation system: Plan, reserve, and pay for a trip with a single phone call or website visit.



MOBILITY: Move More People

First Priority: Targeted Outreach - Provide targeted marketing and travel training towards people with disabilities, active seniors, middle-age adults, and children and their parents. This strategy supports projects that:

- expand existing travel training, bus buddy or ambassador programs throughout the region.
- develop new and innovative marketing and information partnerships or strategies.
- expand exposure of regional fixed routes, trains, and ride share programs to policy makers and “untapped” markets.

Second Priority: Clarified Service Levels – Improve rider and provider understanding of transportation service levels based on different parts of the region. This strategy supports projects that:

- establish and communicate urban/rural transportation service levels.
- establish and inform future residents about limited transportation.
- help people make better location decisions based on their transportation needs.

Third Priority: More People Helping – Help case managers and service providers to refer clients to the most cost effective and appropriate mobility option. This strategy supports projects that:

- provide caseworkers and other “gatekeepers” with travel information resources or tools.
- help caseworkers and other “gatekeepers” better understand the value of utilizing the lowest cost transportation options, when appropriate for the client.
- engage community members or other partners in spreading the word about available mobility options.

For more information about **GOALS AND STRATEGIES**, population and travel demand projections, potential projects, and public comment, see Appendices L-Q.

Joelle's Story

One of Joelle's life and career goals is to attend graduate school and get her Masters in Public Administration. After studying her options and defining her personal and professional goals, Joelle decided the Program at The Evergreen State College was the best fit for her. But to go there, she had to first determine that transportation was not going to be a criteria for selecting a college.

"I didn't want to be forced to go to the U, or Seattle Pacific, just because I use a wheelchair", she said.

To get to The Evergreen State College campus from her office in Seattle, approximately 65 miles, took 5 hours and three different transportation systems. The trip to campus started with a Metro bus from her office in the Central District to the downtown Amtrak Station. From the Amtrak station, Joelle boarded the Coast Starlight train to the Olympia train station. Arriving in Olympia, Joelle used Intercity Transits "Dial-a-lift" to transport her to campus.

Costs for the Seattle to Olympia trip were \$1.50 for the Metro bus, \$20.00 for the Amtrak, and \$1.50 for the Dial-Lift. In addition, Joelle also paid \$70 a week for attendant care, for the night that she stayed at a colleague's house, before making an identical return trip to Seattle. The length of the trip and the time schedule made it impossible for her to travel both ways in a single day. In total, Joelle paid almost \$100 a week to make the regional trip between Seattle and Olympia.

Beyond cost, Joelle faced other barriers that she could only describe as products of a dysfunctional system. For example, to book her trip she had to call three different call centers, each with varying levels of accessibility. Joelle wished for a coordinated regional booking system for making travel arrangements. Joelle is a person of strength, determination, and skill and that enabled her to face the week, after week, after week struggle to get to school.

How many of us could do that?

Definition of Success

While each funded project is expected to identify outcomes and measurements of performance, the overall performance indicators for coordinated transportation in the Puget Sound Region will focus on:

Potential Quality Measures

- Transportation service customer comments
- Dwell times
- Trip times
- Accident reports
- Ability for transportation disadvantaged people to meet medical, employment, and social needs
- Ability for seniors and people with disabilities to remain independent
- Rider satisfaction

Potential Efficiency Measures

- Average cost per trip, including administration and capital depreciation
- Average cost per mile, including administration and capital depreciation
- Average number of passengers per hour or per day
- Level of integration in other plans

Potential Mobility Measures

- Number of people using public transportation in the region, by mode
- Number of public transportation trips in the region, by mode
- Ratio of trips to population density, by mode and area (rural and urban)
- Transportation referenced as a barrier in human service needs assessments